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Commission on Sustainable Development
Twentieth session
16 and 17 May 2013

Report of the regional implementation meeting for Asia and the Pacific

1. The regional implementation meeting for Asia and the Pacific on the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development was held in Bangkok from 22 to 24 April 2013 and was convened by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

2. The meeting was attended by more than 170 participants, including representatives of Governments, major groups[1] and entities of the United Nations system.

3. The following ESCAP members were represented at the meeting: Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, Tuvalu, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu and Viet Nam.

4. Representatives of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, the State of Palestine, Tunisia and Yemen attended as observers.

5. Opening statements were made by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, Noeleen Heyzer, the Regional Director and Representative for Asia and the Pacific of UNEP, Young Woo Park, and ADB Lead Environment Specialist Daniele Ponzi. The

[1] Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, it has been recognized that sustainable development cannot be achieved by Governments alone. This notion is emphasized in the landmark outcome document of that Conference, entitled "Agenda 21: Programme of Action for Sustainable Development", in which this concept was formalized and nine sectors of society were recognized as the main channels through which citizens could organize and participate in international efforts to achieve sustainable development through the United Nations. These nine sectors are officially known as "major groups" (see http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups.html).

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Minister of Environmental Protection of Kazakhstan, Nurlan Kapparov, delivered a message by video. A representative of the United Nations Association of Malaysia, Kim Lee Choy, delivered a special address on youth.

6. The meeting elected the following as members of the Bureau:

Chair:
Vannak Chhun (Cambodia)

Vice-Chairs:
Ahmed Saleem (Maldives)
Peseta Noumea Simi (Samoa)
Askar Tazhiyev (Kazakhstan)

Rapporteur:
Yuba Raj Bhusal (Nepal)

7. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Main outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development: regional perspectives on global processes:
   (a) Main outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, current state of global processes and implications for Asia and the Pacific;
   (b) Perspectives from the region on global processes:
      (i) Institutional framework for sustainable development: global and regional dimensions;
      (ii) Sustainable development goals and the development agenda beyond 2015;
      (iii) Means of implementation: sustainable development financing and technology development and transfer;
      (iv) Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States.
5. Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development: national priorities, implementation of regional arrangements, areas for regional collaboration and the role of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.
6. Other matters.
7. Adoption of the report with Chair's summary.
8. Closing of the meeting.

8. During the three-day meeting, participants discussed the institutional framework for sustainable development, sustainable development goals and the development agenda beyond 2015, as well as the means of implementing that

agenda. They presented the perspectives of Governments, major groups and the international community on those and other aspects of the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. A side event entitled "Sustainable development of Asia-Pacific small island developing States: oceans of opportunity" was held on 22 April 2013.

9. The report of the meeting was adopted on 24 April 2013.

10. The Chair's summary of the views, experiences and achievements of, as well as the challenges faced by, the countries in the region that had been expressed during the meeting is contained in annex I to the present document. A summary of the side event mentioned in paragraph 8 above is contained in annex II.

11. The participants agreed that the present report, including its annexes, should be considered part of the global process to develop sustainable development goals and other relevant global processes.

Annex I

Chair's summary

A. Agenda item 4: main outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development: regional perspectives on global processes

Institutional framework for sustainable development: global and regional dimensions (sub-item (b) (i))

1. The main themes that emerged from the discussions on item 4 (b) (i) included the need for coherence and integration and for the high-level political forum to add value to existing institutions. The need to respect the Rio Principles,[a] in particular principle 7, on common but differentiated responsibilities, was stressed, along with stakeholder engagement.

2. In addition, the following issues were raised: (a) the functioning of the high-level political forum; (b) the role of the Economic and Social Council; and (c) the role of ESCAP.

3. *Functioning of the high-level political forum.* Government representatives reiterated several aspects of the functions of the high-level political forum as they had been agreed upon in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want" (see General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex). In particular, they reiterated that the high-level political forum should be inclusive and increase the participation in decision-making processes of developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing States. In addition, the forum could: (a) enhance integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development; (b) build on the experiences of the Commission on Sustainable Development; (c) avoid duplicating the functions of other forums; and (d) have a focused, dynamic and action-oriented agenda. The outcomes of the forum should not be negotiated; they should provide clear added value in comparison with the outcomes of the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Sustainable Development. The option of developing a hybrid model whereby the forum would be incorporated into both the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, was highlighted. Representatives of the major groups made recommendations on the following points, among others: establishing accountability mechanisms; defining the functions of special rapporteurs; assigning to the high-level political forum a role in tracking progress on key sustainable development challenges, such as food security; using multi-stakeholder approaches at every level of governance, including in the high-level political forum; and applying the principle of subsidiarity.[b] They stressed that the high-level political forum must enable the participation of all States on an equal basis, in particular in decision-making.

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[a] See *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

[b] The principle of devolving decisions to the lowest practical level. The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* defines subsidiarity as "the principle that a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed at a more local level".

4. *The role of the Economic and Social Council.* It was proposed that the Economic and Social Council play a leading role as a primary institutional mechanism for sustainable development.

5. *The role of ESCAP.* Government representatives identified ESCAP as the appropriate platform for regional efforts pertaining to sustainable development. In that regard, ESCAP should take the lead in ensuring coordination within the United Nations system in order to accelerate regional sustainable development processes. Among the recommended functions to be undertaken by ESCAP were: leading regional preparatory processes for high-level political forum sessions in close collaboration with the UNEP regional office and others; communicating broad policy directions arising from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development; steering, enabling, connecting, informing, monitoring and evaluating; and scaling up good practices. It was also suggested that ESCAP focus on nexus issues rather than on specific sectors and that it establish mechanisms for sharing information on best practices and lessons learned. ESCAP should take into consideration the capacity of the secretariat, as well as the capacity of its member States, use existing resources, avoid creating new bureaucratic structures and engage all stakeholders. It was also emphasized that the systematic engagement of regional commissions would support enhanced reporting and accountability mechanisms for implementation. ESCAP and other multilateral organizations should facilitate the management of shared resources, such as oceans. Representatives of major groups requested ESCAP to strengthen its engagement with stakeholders. Representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) highlighted the important role of the United Nations resident coordinators in ensuring United Nations system coordination at the country level and the role of the United Nations Development Group and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, as well as other bodies, in ensuring United Nations system coordination at the global level, noting the importance of close links between the regional coordination role of ESCAP and mechanisms for United Nations system coordination at the country and global levels.

Sustainable development goals and the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 (sub-item (b) (ii))

6. The most important theme that emerged from the discussion on item 4 (b) (ii) was the need to reduce poverty on the basis of a sustainable and equitable development agenda. This was all the more urgent in the Asia and the Pacific region, which, despite having experienced rapid economic growth, still accounted for two thirds of the world's poor. The most serious challenges related to rising inequality, unemployment and the increasing vulnerability to the effects of climate change, including a rise in the sea level, extreme weather events and climate-related natural disasters.

7. Many participants stressed the need to strengthen global and regional partnerships and recognize the right to development and the principle of sovereignty. The application of the Rio Principles, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, was reiterated. The work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals of the General Assembly was generally supported.

8. The meeting also discussed the following issues: (a) the relationship between the development agenda beyond 2015 and sustainable development goals; (b) guiding principles and the basis for sustainable development goals; (c) broad strategies; (d) approaches to developing sustainable development goals; (e) priorities pertaining to sustainable development goals and the development agenda beyond 2015; (f) implementation approaches; and (g) the role of ESCAP.

9. *The relationship between the development agenda beyond 2015 and sustainable development goals.* Government representatives pointed out that sustainable development goals should be an integral part of the agenda beyond 2015 and that there should be a single universal framework. The view was expressed that the sustainable development goals should be limited to the three pillars of sustainable development and not include a fourth dimension related to peace and human security. Some representatives emphasized the participation of civil society in sustainable development mechanisms at both the deliberation and implementation stages.

10. *Guiding principles and the basis for sustainable development goals.* Government representatives made the following recommendations: (a) a truly global set of goals that are flexible and adaptable to the circumstances of specific countries should be developed; (b) sustainable development goals should be based on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; and (c) sustainable development goals should be uncomplicated, practicable and measurable and coherently integrate and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental — in order to address the gaps between the Millennium Development Goals agenda and sustainable development. Other important guiding principles identified included those provided under Agenda 21,[c] the Rio Principles (in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities) and other commitments already made in relation to sustainable development. It was emphasized that new conditionalities should not be created. Representatives of the major groups shared the views of the government delegations and underscored the importance of principle 10 of the Rio Principles, on access to information and participation.

11. *Broad strategies.* Government representatives highlighted the need to integrate and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development; take a holistic path; maintain inclusive development at the core of the framework, including by paying attention to gender and other equality issues, as well as to social and environmental justice; keep the agenda growth-focused and prioritize the right to development for developing countries; underscore the importance of accountable governance; highlight human security, in line with General Assembly resolution 66/290; and engage with youth as development partners. They also cautioned against creating "a laundry list" of the world's problems and putting an unbalanced focus on human rights, as that might result in a series of prescriptions for developing countries.

12. *Approaches to developing sustainable development goals.* Government representatives expressed support for the work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and recommended that it be open and transparent, encourage participation and relations among Governments and be based on

[c] See *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

consensus. The representatives of major groups highlighted a proposal for engagement through a multi-stakeholder advisory group.

13. *Priorities pertaining to sustainable development goals and the development agenda beyond 2015.* Several priorities were identified for the development agenda beyond 2015:

(a) Economy-related issues. Government representatives highlighted the promotion of economic growth as critical for job creation; the quality of growth and jobs; greener growth; sustainable consumption and production; the elimination of discriminatory trade measures; attention to climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, as well as low carbon and resilient development pathways; energy efficiency and renewable energy; and the sustainable use of natural resources. Challenges faced by the increasingly severe effects of climate change were noted as one of the most critical challenges for achieving sustainable development in the region. The opportunities presented by the "blue economy" were noted by representatives of small island developing States. Actions to help eradicate poverty and address inequality would require the creation of an environment conducive to engagement with non-State actors and the implementation of mutually reinforcing approaches to cover the three dimensions of sustainable development. The representatives of the major groups pointed out the need to recognize critical ecological thresholds and "planetary boundaries"; the need to incorporate the cost of externalities into the marketplace; and the need for a democratic and fair financial system. Representatives of international organizations noted that eradicating hunger would require changes in the way food was grown and in consumer demand, fair markets and investment in public resources;

(b) Social development issues. Government representatives recommended that a multidimensional approach be taken to address extreme poverty and inequality, hunger and malnutrition, health (infant and child mortality, maternal health), women's empowerment, education, water and sanitation, food security and food price volatility, sustainable agriculture, sustainable cities, energy security and access. Representatives of major groups highlighted the need to address the following social development issues: green jobs and decent work; productive work, including domestic work; environmental and social justice; human rights, including the rights of indigenous peoples and collective rights to self-determination; the elimination of all forms of violence against women (a dedicated gender equality goal); sexual, health and reproductive rights; social protection, including the payment of a living wage; clean, low-carbon energy sources; food sovereignty; attention to sustainable livelihoods, including for youth; and access to affordable and appropriate technologies. A representative of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS stressed the linkages between health and sustainable development and the persistent challenge of halting the spread of HIV/AIDS as an unfinished Millennium Development Goal owing to structural, legal and social barriers and inequality. The representative requested that essential life-saving medicines be made available and affordable by extending the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights for a further 10 years, and called for innovation and the protection of intellectual property rights. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations pointed out that attaining food security would require action on many fronts, including with regard to the right to food and land tenure reform. UNDP stressed the need to understand and take action to address the poverty-environment nexus;

(c) Environmental sustainability issues. Government representatives highlighted the need to promote sound ecosystem management, including the sound management of the ecosystems of mountains, oceans and forests. The issues of transboundary water systems and integrated water resource management were also highlighted. Representatives of major groups recommended that agricultural production be doubled without making more changes in land use. In that regard, they highlighted the need to ensure sustainable production methods, halt forest harvesting and take action on climate change mitigation and called for a number of measures, including measures aimed at addressing the appropriation and exploitation of land, resources and oceans;

(d) Cross-cutting issues. Representatives of major groups recommended that attention be paid to vulnerable groups in trade regimes; farmer-centric agrarian reform, which cut across several issues, including basic access to and control of resources; respect for human rights and the rights of indigenous people; and other dimensions. They also emphasized the importance of peace and security issues as an integral element of sustainable development;

(e) Towards a transformative agenda. Government representatives highlighted the need for a new development paradigm, such as that described in General Assembly resolution 65/309, entitled "Happiness: towards a holistic approach to development". The Government of Bhutan had adopted such an approach, which included moving away from a vicious cycle to a virtuous cycle. Representatives of major groups pointed to the need to address a failed development model, reform economic governance, radically rethink the concept of growth and tackle the root structural causes of inequality: control over resources, social injustice and shortcomings in relation to human rights, in particular women's rights to autonomy and over their own bodies.

14. *Implementation approaches*. Government representatives highlighted capacity-building, the provision of support for reporting and data management and the participation of stakeholders in the collection of data at the local and national levels. They also spoke of a voluntary registry of commitments. Government representatives also highlighted the need for a recipient-driven approach that takes into account national priorities and ownership. Representatives of major groups urged that partnerships with civil society and accountability mechanisms for all actors be established. It was recommended that the State provide financing, in recognition of the fact that the central responsibility for sustainable development lies with Governments. Other recommendations included: adopting a phased approach with shorter implementation periods, in the event that a 30-year timeframe is adopted for the implementation of sustainable development goals; extending incentives for achievement (this had not been done with the Millennium Development Goals); providing training and education; offering particular support to industries and the private sector; fostering regional cooperation, in particular in relation to clean energy technology; and capitalizing on considerable engineering, science and technology capacity for practical solutions. Representatives of international organizations highlighted the need to focus on "delivering as one" at the country level and the role of UNDP in assisting countries to access financing for environmental initiatives to promote sustainable human development.

15. *The role of ESCAP*. Representatives of Governments suggested that ESCAP propose principles to guide the development of sustainable development goals;

facilitate the establishment of national, subregional and regional platforms on sustainable development goals; support the implementation of the sustainable development goals; and review progress made in achieving those goals. It was mentioned that the mandate of ESCAP with regard to providing input to the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals might require further clarification. Representatives of major groups recommended that ESCAP develop strong horizontal and vertical linkages within the United Nations system for the purpose of enabling effective monitoring and assessment and that it facilitate coordination of efforts to create enabling conditions and empower stakeholders.

Means of implementation: sustainable development financing and technology for development and transfer (sub-item (b) (iii))

16. The representative of UNEP outlined developments in the implementation of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns, which was the only implementation mechanism that had been formally adopted at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. It was expected that the secretariat of the framework, hosted by UNEP, would initially report to the Economic and Social Council on an ad interim basis, but that, at a later date, it would report to the high-level political forum. The representative of ADB explained the Bank's approach for promoting green growth through four programmatic strategies.

17. The following themes, among others, emerged from the panel discussion and the interventions: the need for technology transfer and regional and international cooperation; the need for appropriate and accessible means of implementation, whether relating to technology, finance or trade opportunities; and the need to consider a wide range of financing options while honouring international commitments made with respect to official development assistance.

18. The issues below were raised during the meeting.

19. *Sustainable development financing*. Government representatives recognized the need for collective efforts to address sustainable development. They highlighted the need to fulfil commitments with respect to official development assistance. They stated that sustainable development would be dependent on long-term development financing, including official development assistance, which would require countries to look at a range of financing instruments and sources for funding development outcomes. They pointed out the need to mobilize more domestic resources for sustainable development, noting that principles of good governance, efficiency and effectiveness were important for implementation and that the mobilization of resources was only half the challenge, as access to financing needed to be improved and aligned with sustainable development outcomes. It was highlighted that it would be difficult for the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States to rely on the mobilization of domestic resources as a means of financing sustainable development. The growing national debt in small island developing States and the least developed countries was an impediment to the mobilization of financial resources for sustainable development. It was stressed that the least developed countries and small island developing States would benefit from debt relief arrangements and simpler procedures for accessing funds. Representatives of the major groups expressed concern about the current intellectual property rights regime and stated that it was necessary to integrate externalities into market prices

(by, for example, applying the polluter pays principle and imposing taxes on polluters) and to address the issues related to transfer pricing and tax havens. They proposed that a financial transaction tax be imposed. Independent technology assessments and the application of the precautionary principle were seen as crucial given that new technologies might have unintended negative effects.

20. *Technology transfer*. Government representatives pointed out the strong need for capacity-building in relation to technology transfer, noting that "early movers" on environmentally sound technologies could support other developing countries and that South-South cooperation should be strengthened to complement rather than replace North-South cooperation. Countries also noted the issue of intellectual property rights as one of the obstacles in the region to the use of environmentally sound technologies. They noted that reform was needed to address the issue of perverse incentives for polluters. They also stressed that partnerships with and efforts to learn from the private sector to increase the efficiency with which resources were used would be needed in order to support the transition to a green economy. Representatives of major groups recommended that partnerships be established with the scientific and technological community. Government representatives suggested that ESCAP facilitate cooperation among its members to develop technical cooperation for the transfer of environmentally sound technologies.

Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (sub-item (b) (iv))

21. A side event entitled "Sustainable development of Asia-Pacific small island developing States: oceans of opportunity" was held on 22 April 2013, on the first day of the meeting. Mindful that the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development paid significant attention to oceans and of the ideas contained in the document, and to further enhance awareness of the Oceans Compact (an initiative of the Secretary-General), it was highlighted at the side event that the sustainable and equitable management of ocean resources could help to reduce poverty in small island developing States. Statements made at the event contributed to the formulation of a draft resolution for consideration by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its sixty-ninth session and for prioritizing issues for discussion at the Pacific subregion's preparatory meeting for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be held in Suva from 10 to 12 July 2013.

Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development: national priorities, implementation of regional arrangements, areas for regional collaboration and the role of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (item 5)

22. Government representatives shared information on initiatives, challenges and expectations regarding the process following the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Some participants, particularly those representing small island developing States and major groups, stressed that it was urgent to take action and that it was unacceptable to continue business as usual.

23. Among the initiatives and relevant strategies of Governments that were cited was the national sustainable development strategy and green growth strategies

(2013-2018), as well as the national policy on green growth and national strategic plan on green growth (2013-2030), of Thailand; the national green growth strategy of Viet Nam (2011-2020); the national policy on green growth and the national strategic plan on green growth (2013-2030) of Cambodia; the national development strategies of Afghanistan, Kiribati and Samoa, which are in line with sustainable development principles; and the sustainable development blueprint of Singapore. The representative of Kazakhstan reported on consultations on the development agenda beyond 2015, the establishment of a green economy coalition and the establishment of KazAid. The representative of the Maldives reported that the country had set targets to phase out hydrocholroflourcarbons and reach carbon neutrality by 2020 and that it had plans to make the whole country a biosphere reserve by 2017. Other initiatives included the establishment of a national council for sustainable development and the National Action Plan for Haritha Lanka Programme in Sri Lanka. The representative of Afghanistan highlighted the country's new policy frameworks for enabling climate change adaptation and green jobs, while the representative of Australia indicated that the Government had established the largest representative network of marine protected areas, provided support for regional fisheries and set a national urban policy.

24. The representative of the Russian Federation drew attention to the forthcoming Asia-Pacific energy forum, to be held in Vladivostok from 27 to 30 May 2013. The representative of Viet Nam noted plans by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to establish a green growth centre. The representative of Kazakhstan highlighted the Green Bridge Partnership Programme, which would initially focus on countries with special needs and in the framework of which a stakeholder meeting would be held in the second half of 2013.

25. Representatives of major groups drew attention to local awareness-raising activities, as well as to capacity-building and partnerships.

26. Key challenges noted by government representatives were: transboundary pollution; chemicals and waste; sustainable cities; the impact of resource-based industries on both environmental integrity and social harmony; social security and stability; environmental, social and economic vulnerability; climate change impacts and adaptation requirements; access to clean energy; financial vulnerability, including reliance on gross domestic product (GDP) as a measure of progress; high debt levels; the vulnerabilities of mountain ecosystems; financing for implementation and green technologies; unfavourable intellectual property rights frameworks; gender-based discrimination and low levels of achievement of the Millennium Development Goals related to gender equality; conflict situations; natural disasters; and food insecurity. Countries graduating from least developed country status were facing particular problems and required supportive strategies for the transition, while small island developing States were dealing with threats related to the need for relocation and high youth unemployment. Representatives of major groups highlighted the following issues, among others: ecosystem destruction that increased poverty; economic instability; insecure livelihoods; and growth strategies in least developed countries that were based on polluting industries.

27. Government representatives identified the following solutions: including civil society in decision-making processes and relying on better indicators of progress; establishing public-private partnerships and exploring tripartite collaboration; mainstreaming sustainable consumption and production policies; enhancing education,

skills and technical knowledge; sharing lessons on green economy and green growth strategies, including as a basis for diversification; applying community-based, integrated approaches to management; building capacity to support the integration of environmental issues into development; setting concrete plans to formulate a unique regional strategy; and examining priority sectors for the region. The representatives of major groups highlighted the need to recognize indigenous, traditional and local knowledge; conduct farmer-centred agricultural research; pay attention to the role of women farmers; recognize the cultural value of agricultural lands; gain access to renewable energy; build resilience to climate change; apply ecosystems approaches that take into account the interconnections of human beings and nature; foster city-to-city cooperation and knowledge management; set legal norms and standards and make commitments to human rights non-negotiable; improve livelihoods of workers and families and give workers the right to seek collective action; set a just transition for workers; promote social dialogue and good governance; ensure that engagement with the private sector is complemented by efforts to address accountability; and formalize the participation of civil society.

28. Regarding the role of ESCAP, Government representatives recommended that the secretariat continue to convene regional forums on the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development; support coordination of the global processes on the development agenda beyond 2015 at the regional level; promote the coherent and balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development; support consultation mechanisms on reviewing priority areas; take a strengthened role in facilitating discussions with all regional actors, including major groups; review progress and identify gaps and challenges; renew political commitment; and develop recommendations on thematic and emerging issues. It was also recommended that ESCAP provide assistance to national development and support country-specific initiatives and, together with ADB and UNEP, strengthen efforts with regard to moving beyond the "GDP agenda". The major groups recommended that collaborative action be taken to help fund the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

Annex II

Summary of the side event entitled "Sustainable development of Asia-Pacific small island developing States: oceans of opportunity"

1. A side event entitled "Sustainable development of Asia-Pacific small island developing States: oceans of opportunity" was held on 22 April 2013 to ensure that regional implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development be focused on making tangible and practical contributions to sustainable development with regard to two main issues of concern to Asia-Pacific small island developing States:

(a) Oceans and seas: opportunities for sustainable development;

(b) The Third Global International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

2. During the side event, it was noted that the Pacific Ocean was a regional and global public good both in terms of resources and environmental services, and that its effective management must be a priority for Pacific small island developing States, as well as for the broader Asia-Pacific region and the rest of the world.

3. Small island developing States were facing inequality and disparity in economic terms and through their vulnerability to environmental degradation and climate change, most of the effects of which were well beyond their control. Much discussion had taken place since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development[a] was held in 1992 and in the context of other processes, such as the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Barbados Programme of Action)[b] and the Millennium Science Initiative of the World Bank, but it remained unclear how many tangible outcomes had been achieved and how much was really being done. Further discussion, for example on the high-level political forum, while sounding interesting might not lead to real and tangible outcomes for small island developing States.

4. There was a need to discuss not only the vulnerability of but also the opportunities open to small island developing States in forging the development agenda beyond 2015, that is, to harness opportunities that take advantage of the fact that small island developing States really are "large ocean developing States". In that context, it was important that small island developing States effectively manage their oceanic resources and regulate them in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea[c] so that distant fishing nations would be held accountable for the use of that global public good.

5. It could be argued that issues pertaining to small island developing States had been well covered in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on

[a] See *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[b] See *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[c] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1833, No. 31363.

Sustainable Development, but the question of how much had been achieved remained unanswered. Pacific small island developing States were not homogenous. The needs and context of each country must be taken into account when designing sustainable development initiatives. Needs and opportunities must not be standardized.

6. Practical solutions must be the priority. Climate change was already increasing the vulnerability of coastal communities, not just in atoll countries but in larger countries as well.

7. New and effective modalities for cooperation that go beyond traditional relationships with development partners must be adopted. Practical partnerships, such as the Pacific Oceanscape initiative, were evolving and recognition that sacrifices must be made in balancing the objectives of development with the principles of sustainable development was growing. The Pacific Oceanscape initiative demonstrated to the world that Pacific small island developing States were committed to doing their part in the sustainable management of oceans and seas. Some States, such as Australia and the Cook Islands, had also made bold initiatives to preserve large parts of their oceanic environment.

8. In that light, it was noted that sustainable development must start at the national level. With regard to such issues as fishing licences, there was a need to continue to focus on strength in unity. Priority issues must be identified that were for the benefit of everyone in the Pacific subregion.

9. During the side event it was noted that Kiribati and the Solomon Islands would submit a draft resolution to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its sixty-ninth session on the "ocean economy" and how that economy could contribute to sustainable development.

10. The secretariat listed the following four objectives for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be held in Samoa in 2014:

(a) To assess performance regarding the Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and related processes and identify lessons and remaining gaps;

(b) To seek new political commitment to address the special needs and vulnerabilities of small island developing States and identify practical action to further the effective implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation;

(c) To identify new and emerging challenges and opportunities for sustainable development and ways of addressing them;

(d) To identify priorities for the sustainable development of small island developing States for consideration and elaboration as part of the development agenda beyond 2015.

11. National preparations were well under way in the Pacific subregion, with Fiji having been designated to host the Pacific preparatory meeting from 10 to 12 July 2013. ESCAP and the working group on sustainable development of the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific were taking the lead in consolidating regional preparations for the Third International Conference, building on national country

reports, the preparation of which was supported by UNDP and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat.

12. The importance of partnering with civil society was highlighted at the side event. Other partnerships, such as those expanding South-South cooperation in the Pacific, also offered great opportunities for the Pacific subregion. However, partnerships must not be solely of a financing nature and go beyond the traditional relationship with donors.

13. In looking at opportunities supported through the process of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, such as valuing natural capital in the context of the green economy, the commoditization of nature should be avoided. The integrity of the models used to value natural assets was also highlighted as important.

14. With regard to the management of the Pacific Ocean, the importance of effective ocean governance, including continuation of the efforts to strengthen the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, was noted, along with an approach on such issues as ocean fertilization, seabed mining and geo-engineering.

15. Much had been done in Asia and the Pacific that must be built upon in the future, including the five-year review of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation and the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, as well as more recent initiatives, such as the Dili Consensus adopted by the Group of Seven Plus at the international conference on the post-2015 development agenda held in Dili from 26 to 28 February 2013, and the preparations for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

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Commission on Sustainable Development
Twentieth session

Report of the regional implementation meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean*

1. The participants at the regional implementation meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean had two days of very fruitful discussions, which evidenced the wealth and the creativeness of the work and thinking in the region. They all had the freedom to share, listen and learn, which helped them to realize that they shared many perspectives on the post-2015 development agenda. The present summary conveys the broad lines of the rich dialogue.

2. The special vulnerabilities of the small island developing States were amply acknowledged at the meeting. The two-day meeting of Caribbean States held in advance provided key inputs by highlighting the challenges faced by those States. The participants also drew attention to the fact that the region recognizes those needs and shows full solidarity with the Caribbean States.

3. The participants agreed on the cornerstones upon which the new agenda should be built and share the view that, to achieve well-being and eradicate poverty in a structural manner, progress must be made towards a visionary sustainable development platform. The regional approach is systemic and holistic, and all participants have emphasized the importance of the transition towards a new mentality that places humans at the centre from a comprehensive perspective that is in harmony with the planet.

4. It was concluded that the new agenda should be universal, with obligations, responsibilities and opportunities for all. It should be an agenda that obliges all countries, and not only developing countries, to take action. In this vein, the participants also agreed that it should address global aspects and processes, such as international trade, the financial system and migration.

5. Conceptually, the agenda should enable countries to stand up to global challenges but at the same time have the capacity to address the specific features, needs and priorities of regional, national and local contexts. Accordingly, it will be

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important for the framework to provide modalities of differentiation to enable the countries to take ownership of the agenda and adjust it to their development plans.

6. Emphasis was placed on the need to build the future agenda around interrelations between key themes and sectors for development in order to face complex challenges and seek concrete and sustainable solutions within a rights-based approach.

7. One of the priority themes is sustainable production and consumption patterns, which participants emphasized should be both an objective and a cross-cutting pillar of the new agenda, recognizing that sustainable production and consumption have an economic, cultural and social perspective and are prerequisites for achieving genuine equity, inclusion and environmental sustainability.

8. The participants recognized the centrality of education as a condition for development and consider education as a fundamental human right necessary to guarantee all other rights. They also emphasized that education was a prerequisite for inclusive growth and for satisfying other needs, including health, food security and decent employment. Furthermore, they affirmed the importance of education for sustainability.

9. The participants made headway in identifying priorities for the new agenda, such as food security and the need for infrastructure for development, in particular for connectivity in the telecommunications, transport and energy sectors. The need to generate decent work, a determinant of equitable and sustained growth, was a recurring theme. The participants drew attention to such critical issues as demographic trends, the dizzying pace of urbanization, migration, health and the need to build resilience to a range of risks and vulnerabilities.

10. Means of implementation are of great importance for the region. From development assistance and South-South and triangular cooperation to public spending and the role of the private sector, financing for sustainable development is a key tool for turning this agenda into a reality.

11. The participants made progress in identifying the areas in which continued efforts are required if the region is to maintain its leadership in defining the new agenda. They agreed upon the need to continue working immediately and beyond 2015 to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and recognized that they must look harder at how to achieve that continuation in practical terms. Understanding how to do this varies, from a proposal to integrate the Goals fully into the framework of the sustainable development goals, to proposals to keep the two sets of goals separate.

12. One consideration arising from those two approaches to the relationship between the Millennium Development Goals and the sustainable development goals is how to prioritize resources and poverty eradication efforts. Concern was expressed that financing for immediate needs could be diverted towards other efforts. At the same time, it was clear that eradicating poverty in a sustainable manner and tackling basic needs would need investment and structural public policies.

13. One tension that used to exist between the development and sustainability agendas has now been overcome. It has been stated repeatedly that irreversible poverty eradication must occur within a context of sustainable development.

14. At present, the task of forging a deeper understanding of how to translate this synergy into defining a harmonious relationship between growth and the natural environment remains pending. There are diverse visions of how to achieve this, whether the starting point should be the planet's own limits or the response needed to provide for the well-being of 9 billion people. As the participants saw it, the two approaches must be complementary.

15. After two days of intensive and productive discussions, it became clear that the region has an enormous leadership potential in breaking with old paradigms and presenting creative visions. The experience of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012, showed the participants that, working as a region, they have greater capacity to influence the agenda.

16. For the region it is clear that the only way to move ahead on this path is through broad and meaningful participation, both in defining and in implementing the sustainable development agenda. The countries of the region must work hand in hand with civil society in all its forms, as well as with the private sector and international organizations, treating each other as agents of change collectively responsible for the future.

17. A brief summary does not adequately capture the richness of the discussions at the meeting. However, the participants trust that the words above will reflect the dynamic, innovative and constructive spirit of the meeting.